



Ernie Fletcher
Governor

Mark David Goss
Chairman

Teresa J. Hill, Secretary
Environmental and Public
Protection Cabinet

Commonwealth of Kentucky
Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet
Public Service Commission

John W. Clay
Commissioner

Timothy J. LeDonne
Commissioner
Department of Public Protection

211 Sower Blvd.
P.O. Box 615
Frankfort, Kentucky 40602-0615
Telephone: (502) 564-3940
Fax: (502) 564-3460

NEWS RELEASE

Contact:
Andrew Melnykovich
(502) 564-3940 x208
(502) 330-5981 (cell)

PSC TO PUBLICIZE 811 AS NEW BEFORE-YOU-DIG NUMBER *Radio announcements will begin airing in mid-April*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 11, 2007) – The Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) soon will begin informing Kentuckians to dial 811 before beginning any excavation.

Public service announcements about the new before-you-dig number will begin airing on radio stations across Kentucky in mid-April and will continue through September.

“We want everyone in Kentucky to know that 811 is the first number to call before digging where there might be underground utility lines,” said Governor Ernie Fletcher.

The Federal Communications Commission has designated 811 as the national number to call to have underground utility lines marked prior to excavation. Until now, most states have used 10-digit toll-free numbers unique to each state.

“An easy-to-remember uniform number represents a significant step toward reducing the number of accidents caused by someone digging into a buried utility line,” Governor Fletcher said. “These accidents impose costs on utilities, cause property damage and can result in injury or even death. A quick 811 call can prevent many of these accidents from happening.”

Kentucky’s call-before-you-dig center is operated by Kentucky 811 (formerly Kentucky Underground Protection, Inc.), a consortium of utility companies, local governments and others with an interest in preventing damage to buried utility lines. The PSC works closely with Kentucky 811 and regularly investigates accidents or outages caused by someone digging into a buried utility line.

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PSC Chairman Mark David Goss noted that state law requires that, in most cases, anyone using mechanized equipment for excavation must first call and request the marking of any buried utility facilities. However, owners of underground lines are not required to provide information on their location to the 811 call center, he said.

“While calling 811 is the first step to take before you dig, it may not be the only call you’ll need to make to obtain information about underground lines,” Goss said.

All of the major utility companies in Kentucky, along with many smaller companies and municipal utilities, are members of Kentucky 811. There is no membership fee.

“The PSC urges any owner of underground facilities that is not a member of Kentucky 811 to join immediately,” Goss said. “The only cost is the nominal fee charged for each request to locate buried lines, and it is well worth it if it prevents them from being damaged.”

The PSC will spend \$65,000 from available funds for the radio announcements. In addition, the PSC has received a \$35,000 grant from the federal Office of Pipeline Safety to work with Kentucky 811 to promote the call-before-you-dig program.

Kentucky 811 is undertaking additional outreach efforts, as is the Common Ground Alliance, the national organization that promotes effective damage prevention practices for underground utility lines.

The PSC is an independent agency attached for administrative purposes to the Department of Public Protection in the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet. It regulates more than 1,500 gas, water, sewer, electric and telecommunication utilities operating in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has approximately 110 employees.

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